



North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

Charles R. Fullwood, Executive Director

TO: Bryan Kluchar, Project Development Engineer
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch, NCDOT

FROM: Marla Chambers, Highway Projects Coordinator *Marla Chambers*
Habitat Conservation Program, NCWRC

DATE: August 26, 2003

SUBJECT: Needmore Road (SR 1364/SR 1114) improvements, Macon and Swain Counties.
TIP No. R-4440.

In our recent telephone conversation we discussed possible options for improvements to Needmore Road in Swain and Macon counties. I have since consulted with other North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) biologists familiar with the project and reviewed my files in order to provide the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) our position and concerns for this project.

As you know, Needmore Road is a narrow dirt and gravel road, which runs along a portion of the Little Tennessee River that flows between Franklin, NC and Fontana Lake. The Little Tennessee River in that area is considered one of the most significant aquatic habitats in North Carolina, as well as the southeastern United States. The river supports populations of Appalachian elktoe (*Alasmidonta raveneliana*) and littlewing pearlymussel (*Pegias fabula*), both federal and state Endangered, and is designated critical habitat for the spotfin chub (*Cyprinella monacha*), federal and state Threatened. Numerous other state listed and rare species inhabit the Little Tennessee River in this area. The North Carolina Chapter of the Nature Conservancy is in the process of purchasing 4,400 acres of land along Needmore Road and the adjacent river to protect this rare and sensitive ecosystem.

While the road has been under consideration for widening and paving, the NCWRC recommends a paving-in-place alternative, which would reduce sediment input into the river from runoff and periodic flooding. We understand that at least one area of the road has a tendency to wash out. Although we support stabilizing the area(s) to prevent further sedimentation impacts and look to NCDOT for low-impact stabilization solutions, any stabilization along the Little Tennessee River will need to consider the potential impacts to rare